



CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

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**STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT J. PAPP, JR., CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE
U.S. COAST GUARD, REGARDING THE U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY
ORGANIZATIONAL AND CLIMATE ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE REPORT**

The United States Coast Guard Academy has been developing leaders of character and preparing them to serve as commissioned officers in the United States Coast Guard for more than 130 years. Today, the Coast Guard Academy is one of the finest and most selective institutions in the nation – producing more than 10,000 commissioned officers since its founding in 1876. The Academy experience engenders a dedication to public service, personal growth, and lifelong learning wherein eighty-five percent of Academy graduates voluntarily choose to serve beyond their initial five-year obligation, and eighty percent go on to earn graduate degrees. Today, newly commissioned ensigns report to Coast Guard units upon graduation prepared to serve their nation as leaders in America's maritime, multi-mission, military service. It is our challenge and our accepted responsibility to ensure the Academy continues its proud heritage by balancing academic excellence with exceptional character and leadership development.

In September of 2006, I chartered a Task Force to assess the overall organizational climate, leadership training and character development program at the Coast Guard Academy. The Task Force undertook a cross-cutting review, evaluation, and assessment of policies, organizational practices, and cultural issues that affect the four-year process of transforming young men and women into commissioned officers. Senior Coast Guard leaders are both responsible for, and dedicated to, ensuring that the Coast Guard Academy is a model for continuous improvement, as well as an exceptional military and academic institution.

As I announced when I chartered this self-assessment, the Task Force Report will be available for all to review. I encourage you to read the Report. It highlights both longstanding and emerging challenges we face in developing the newest generation of prospective Coast Guard officers. One message is clear throughout - we must remain unwavering in our resolve to ensure the Academy exemplifies our Core Values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty.

A Call for Action

The missions of the U.S. Coast Guard have never been more relevant or visible to the American public. It is paramount that we continuously reflect on our performance and assess all aspects of our organization, including the Coast Guard Academy. Through rigorous, transparent self assessment will we ensure the Academy remains a high performing, high achieving institution characterized by the ethical behavior of its cadets, faculty and staff. While many top notch organizations and academic institutions engage in the process of self-assessment, U.S. Service Academies are properly subjected to additional scrutiny by the public, elected officials, alumni and the Service itself. In addition, Service Academies must be fully responsive to the needs of the nation while remaining steadfast to their proud traditions of service.

Like the prudent mariner at sea, we must regularly take a “fix” to ascertain our position and use that information to adjust our course along the way, accounting for changes in weather and environmental conditions. The Task Force findings provide us with several lines of position by which we can take a “fix” and chart the course ahead for the Academy.

Task Force Findings

The Task Force found that the Academy remains a valuable national asset that continues to produce very successful Coast Guard officers. It also confirmed that the faculty and staff are highly capable and fully committed. Not surprisingly, the Task Force found that cadets passing through the archways of Chase Hall, the cadet barracks at the Academy, are part of a new generation that is the most intellectually diverse and technologically sophisticated in our nation’s history. Like all new classes entering the Academy, today’s cadets continually challenge us to improve the processes by which transformation from civilian to cadet to officer occurs.

The Task Force identified a number of opportunities for improvement, summarized in the following principal themes:

1. Emphasize the concept of “officership”¹ throughout the Academy experience and across all functional lines; provide clear and unmistakable guidance to every member of the faculty and staff that they share responsibility for the leadership and character development of our cadets.
2. Identify and implement ways to assess and improve cadet leadership and character development programs.
3. Elevate Respect in the cadet experience (as currently exists with the concept of Honor at the Academy), addressing issues of alcohol abuse, sexual harassment and assault, and other standards of conduct.
4. Create a more diverse faculty, staff and Corps of Cadets.
5. Improve governance to guide, assess and measure change through external oversight and auditing mechanisms.
6. Systematically plan for and support the Academy’s long term programmatic requirements, including infrastructure renewal and strategic direction.

As with any worthwhile self-assessment, the Task Force Report focuses on those areas in which change and greater attention are most needed. This process and the constructive criticism it entails can be uncomfortable. However, it is vital to remember that those areas singled out for change are relatively few within the context of the Academy’s overall climate and outstanding record of producing graduates who serve the Coast Guard and this nation with distinction.

The Task Force Report provides an opportunity for collaboration that can lead to meaningful and enduring change. This change requires responsible leadership. We must ensure the Coast Guard Academy continues as an institution of academic excellence while at the same

¹ Officership – The process by which cadet leadership and character development principles are reaffirmed through all aspects of cadet life, including all academic, sports and training programs.

time reinforcing all efforts to develop leaders of character consistent with the principles of “officership” outlined by the Task Force. We accept this responsibility and welcome the opportunity to improve the Academy experience.

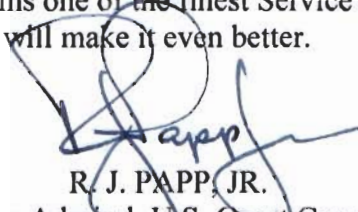
The Way Ahead

Armed with the information provided by the Task Force, we will lay the framework for real, purposeful and sustained change at the Academy. The goal is to channel the passion for excellence that already exists among the cadets, faculty and staff into making every aspect of cadet life a coordinated, supportive step in the process of creating outstanding Coast Guard officers. Senior Coast Guard leadership is committed to visiting the Academy frequently to meet with cadets, faculty and staff, and see firsthand that positive change is taking place.

The Academy will soon receive new strategic direction from the Commandant that will emphasize opportunities for improvement identified in the Task Force Report. Unity of effort and clarity of purpose throughout the four year process of preparing cadets to be members of a competent, inclusive officer corps will be the foundation of this guidance. We will also seek the help of key stakeholders in a collaborative effort to ensure that the Academy meets the needs of our Service and our Nation.

The Task Force provided an expansive, detailed report with numerous recommendations. I am directing the Academy Board of Trustees (BOT) to review the report and present an implementation plan within ninety days for accepted recommendations and long-term change. Also, efforts are already underway to review and update the BOT Charter to ensure this governance body has the clarity of purpose and authority to aggressively pursue the changes needed at the Academy. The BOT will exercise a strong and persistent oversight role to ensure that real and enduring change occurs at the Academy. The BOT will report its progress directly to me and senior Coast Guard leadership at regular intervals.

The Task Force Report provides a critical point of reference as we collectively chart a course for the Academy to achieve even higher levels of excellence in developing commissioned officers who live the core values, are imbued with our Service’s principles of operations, and possess the leadership competencies that are fundamental to the Coast Guard’s current, and more importantly, future success. We are at an exciting juncture in the Academy’s long and celebrated history; the real and sustained changes we will undertake together portend a bright future. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy remains one of the finest Service Academies and institutions of higher learning in the world. We will make it even better.



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